

COLOMBIA: IN FOCUS

A WEEKLY UPDATE FROM THE EMBASSY OF COLOMBIA

March 15, 2011

Did You Know...

Expired Andean Trade Preferences Hurt the Colombian and U.S. Economies

The Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA) provides key industries in Colombia with access to the U.S. market and plays an important role in the country's economic viability and growth. In addition, ATPDEA is an important tool in the fight against drug trafficking in Colombia, as trade preferences have helped to develop and strengthen legitimate industries in the country, and provide employment alternatives to the illicit drug economy.

- Last year, **60 percent of Colombian exports** to the U.S. benefited from ATPDEA, accounting for \$9.5 billion in trade.
- Colombia's legal economy is being severely hurt by the expiration of the trade preferences and more than **500,000 jobs are now at risk in Colombia**.
- The Association of Floral Importers in Florida claims that the expiration of the ATPDEA preferences puts **220,000 American jobs at risk**.

Below are two editorials published yesterday, which underscore why it is important for Congress to extend preferences. While both focus on the pending free trade agreement, they also highlight how inaction on expanding trade relations with Colombia, through the FTA and ATPDEA, is not in the interest of the U.S. or Colombian economies.

The Washington Post — THE WALL STREET JOURNAL —

"Time to Act on Free Trade"

March 14, 2011

"No one even tries to deny the economic benefits to American companies and workers of the two pacts [U.S. FTAs with Panama and Colombia], especially the one to open the much larger Colombian market. Indeed, it would enable U.S. exports to enter Colombia duty-free, as Colombian products have entered the United States for many years. Alas, in retaliation for Republicans' refusal to extend trade-adjustment assistance, House Democrats have held up extension of long-standing duty-free access to U.S. markets for Colombia and other struggling Andean nations."

To read the full text, visit:
<http://tinyurl.com/4ggs6jj>

"Democrats vs. Obama on Trade"

March 14, 2011

"'American farmers lost \$1 billion in sales to Colombia over the last two years,' Mr. Baucus said. 'China has tripled its share of the Colombian market, ours has declined by 20%. American jobs are at stake.'... 'How can [Colombia] depend on the United States anymore if we just don't act? You know, it's huge, strategic geopolitical reasons for us to conclude this agreement in Colombia,' Mr. Baucus said. 'We don't conclude this, the trend lines are pretty clear. This is no-brainer, Mr. Ambassador, no-brainer, and I just hope we get this passed quickly.'"

To read the full text, visit:
<http://tinyurl.com/5sme47s>

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